A MOST COMFORTABLE AND Christian Dialogue,

between the Lord, and the Soule.

BY

Mr. WILLIAM COWPER, Bishop of *Galloway*.

Matth. 11: 28.

Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavie laden, and I will refresh you.

LONDON,
Printed by *Richard Badger*, and are to bee sold by *John Grismond*, dwelling in *Ivie-lane*. 1635.

C1173.1.25*
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April 12, 1939

TO THE RIGHT *Worſhipfull*, Sr. DAVID MURREY, Knight, ſpeciall Gentleman of the Prince his Bed-Chamber.

IT is (Right Worſhipfull) the common condition of all Chriſtians, howſoever diſjoyned in place, that they are militant in one warfare againſt Satan with his principalities, Powers, and ſpirituall wickedneſſe, whoſe ſtratagems are innumerable, and the manner of his aſſaults manifold: he troubleth not all

Gods children one manner of way; for ſo every one might eaſily eſpie wherein his ſtrength lies, but makes choice of the temptation, as by long experience he hath learned, it may be moſt effectuall to work upon our naturall diſpoſition. Like as on the other hand, the grace by which God ſtrengthneth his children to reſiſt him, is much more manifold; whereby they are inſtructed to uſe the armour of God, with ſuch variety of heavenly wiſdome, that 'tis a wonder to ſee, how by one and the ſelfeſame ſentence of Gods word, at ſundry hands, ſundry

dry manner of waies Satan is confounded: and therfore it is very needfull, that in the ſpirituall warfare there ſhould be a mutuall intelligence among the Souldiers of Chriſt, as well for diſcovering of Satans ſeverall ſleights, in aſſaulting; for the more his policy is deteſted, the better may we eſchew it; as alſo for the manifeſtation of God's rich mercy in aſſiſting.

For this cauſe have I bin induced to communicate to others, theſe meditations as it pleaſed God by experience to communicate them unto mee; for in the middeſt of

darknes which covered the minde, and restlesse feare which disquieted the conscience, the Lord made thē suddenly to breake out, like sparkles of light sent from his owne throne of Grace, bringing with them light, peace, and joy, which in a moment removed the former feares, and pacified the perturbations of my troubled soule, as they were unto me, so I wish they may be meanes of comfort unto others: but I know that the same argument of comfort, which hath comforted one in temptations, doth not alwayes comfort another: nay

not

not in the ſelfeſame tentation; for the Lord will have his praiſe reſerved to himſelfe, that he onely is the God of all comfort. It is not the Word (ſaith David) *but God by the Word that did quicken him,* Pſal. 119. 9. *Yea, the moſt comfortable promiſe of the goſpel is moſt terrible to the troubled conſcience, except the Lord by it work in the heart a ſenſe of his mercy: and therefore ſuch as want comfort, let thē ſeek it from the God of comfort. Nevertheles, that which we haue, we giue evē as we have received it; that it may ſtand as a memorial*

of my thankfulneſſe to God who ſhewed his great mercy upon me, when within my ſelf I had receiued the ſentence of death; and a teſtimony of my loue toward them who are militant againſt Satan: And ſpecially of that chriſtian remembrance I haue alway of you in the Lord Ieſus; to whoſe grace I commend you, now and for euer.

Your Worſhips
In the Lord Ieſus,

William Cowper,

A RIGHT COMFORTABLE DIALOGUE betweene the *Lord*, and a troubled SOVLE.

The LORD.

O My beloved, why feareſt thou; and art ſo caſt downe and diſquieted within thy ſelfe? doeſt thou well to bee angry with my chaſtiſements? and why art thou offended, that I ſhould make thee like to my ſelfe, cauſing thee to walke in that way of inward and outward griefs,

which I did tread before thee? why refuseſt thou to take up my croſſe and follow me, & to taſte of that cup which I dranke before thee and for thee?

The Soule.

O Lord, give me of thy Spirit, and all trouble with thee, or for thee, ſhall be ſweet unto me: what ever thou didſt beare (O Lord) it was for me: and if I were ſo diſpoſed as I ſhould, then would I be content to beare al that thou (my God) ſhouldeſt pleaſe to lay on me. But alas, it is my curſed corruption that makes me thinke

thy

thy crosse my burthen, Lord therefore uphold mee with thy grace, that I may count thy yoke easie, & find joy in these sufferings with thee.

The LORD.

I Know the cause of thy griefe and terror, to be the consideration of thy sins: but I pray thee, why lookest thou so to thy sinnes, that thou lookest not also to my mercies? why wouldst thou so extoll thy evill deeds, that thou shouldest extenuate my rich mercy; or in any way compare the one with the other? was it for

thy

thy good deeds that first I entred into friendship with thee? and thinkest thou now, that for thy evill deeds, I will utterly forsake thee, seeing it is among thy praises; that the worke which I begin, I perfect it? I like it well indeed, to see thee grieved for the sins thou hast done against mee; but I would have thee also cōforted in the mercies that I have shewed thee. Call to mind my works of old and what I have done to thee since thou canst remember: how cared I for thee in thy young & tender

der yeeres? Looke back now and see; did not the Angell of my presen ce lead thee, whē thou hadst no wisdome nor strength to govern thee? did I not then begin to acquaint thee with the knowledge and feare of my Name? canst thou deny now that my mercy preserved thee from many sinnes, whereunto thy nature was prone, & ready to have declined? and when thou sinnedst, with what long patience have I waited thy turning? and how lovingly have I winked at thy transgressions? and

and whē I had given thee grace to repēt of thy sins and to seek my favour & mercy for the sins of thy youth, with a melting heart, and a mourning eie canst thou deny that I have filled thy heart wth my joyes, and made thy tongue burst out in glorying speeches? and why then wilt thou not trust in my mercies to the end?

The Soule.

I Were, O Lord, most unthankfull, if I should not confesse, that many a time in the multitude of my thoughts thy mercies have com-

comforted me: but alas, I have not answered thy loving kindnes: for after many mercies received, I have sinned against thee, contrary to my light, and my sins are now before me, witnessing that I am unworthy to tast of the sweetnesse of thy mercy any more.

The LORD.

IS my mercy only for a day, or for a yeere? or is it for ever & ever toward those whom I have made mine in *Christ Iesus*? wilt thou restrain my mercies and limit thē with so narrow bounds as to thinke they

they cannot be extended over al thy transgressions wilt thou measure my mercies with so narrow a span, as to think I have no more to give, than thou hast an heart to receive: is it not among my praises, that I am able to doe exceeding aboundantly above al that my children can aske or think of me? knowest thou not, that as the heavens are above the earth, so my thoughts are above thine? hast thou not considered that my mercy is above all my workes: how much more then is it above thee, who

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art nothing in cõpariſon of my works? and if it be above thee, how much more above al that thou canſt doe? why then wilt thou match thy ſins with my mercies? If I require ſuch mercy in my children, that I will have one of them to forgive another, not onely 7. times, but 70. times 7. times: what pitty and compaſſion and readineſſe to forgive is in my ſelfe?

Therfore, my beloved, deſpaire not for the multitude of thy ſins; but be comforted with my promiſes of mercy: I have made

made them without any exception of time. For, *at what time ſoever a ſinner doth repent him of his ſins, I haue promiſed to put away his wickednes out of my remembrance.* I have made them without exception of ſins; *for albeit your ſins were as ſcarlet, they ſhall be made as white as ſnow.* I have made them without exception of perſons; for *whoſoever ſhal depart from his wicked wayes, & turne to me, I ſhall receive him.* Let this threefold univerſality of my promiſes ſuſtaine thee, that thy infidelity contract not my mercies

mercies into narrower bounds than I have extended them.

The Soule.

BE mercifull (Lord) to my infidelity: I beleeve in part, Lord helpe my unbeleefe, ſtabliſh and confirme my unſtable heart with thy good and holy ſpirit. My conſcience doth in ſuch ſort condemne mee, that I ſtand in feare of thy juſtice; for thou art greater than the conſcience, and wilt much more condemne me, if thou doeſt enter into judgement with me.

The

The LORD.

OMy beloved, cõsider that the cause of thy present unquietnes, is because with the one eye, thou lookest to thy sins, and my Fathers Iustice: and with the other lookest not to me; in whom his justice is satisfied, and thy sins punished already Tel me (I pray thee) thinkest thou to get in thy self, & the holines of thy disposition, that wch shall exempt thee frõ the feare of his justice? or art thou content to seek it in me? If in thy selfe thou seekest

keſt it, remember what thou art doing: wilt thou have the *Lord* bound and obliged to thee? wilt thou be thine owne Saviour? or ſhall it be ſaid his mercy ſaved thee not? If no miſery were in thee, whereupon ſhould his mercy bee manifeſted? and if thy diſpoſition in the earth were ſuch as it ſhould be, then what remaineth, but that the praiſe of his mercy ſhold fall to the ground? turne thee therefore to me, and ſeeke thy life in me.

If thou wilt know what is thine; thou art a ſinner: let

let my praise be reserved to my selfe, I am thy Saviour. Esteemst thou that my wounds are ineffectuall? or that there is no force in my sufferings? counteſt thou thy sins so deadly, that my merit & vertue cannot cure them? wil a *Physitian* powre out a rare ointment, either where no need is, or else, where it cannot profit? & thinkeſt thou, that my Father would have my bloud to be shed in vain? If his justice terrifie thee, remember his justice was satisfied in me, & that he pronounceth this sentēce him-

himſelfe, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.* I came into the world, not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance. Tarry not from mee becauſe thou art a ſinner, but for that cauſe come to me, and I will refreſh thee.

The Soule.

O Lord, I know that there is a cleanſing and reconciling vertue in thy bloud: that life is in thy death: but ſtil I feare, my ſins deſerve thou ſhouldeſt neither apply thy vertue, nor thy merit to me: for alas, I find that yet the

the old man is ſtrong and lively in me: and that yet the motions of ſinne have power in me to bring forth fruit unto death.

The Lord.

BE not, I pray thee, injurious to the worke of my grace in thee; complaine not ſo of thy corruptiõ, but that thoumaiſt give unto me mine owne praiſe. Canſt thou deny but that thou haſt felt my power working in thy foule? Have I not ſprinkled thy conſcience many times with the pacifying blond of Chriſt; from which

which hath flowed to thee such a witnessing of good things; such a sense of mercy, as for the time hath filled thy heart with joy, and thy mouth with songs of praise? Have I not sometime stirred thee up in great fervency, to call on the Name of the Lord? Have I not made thee to give *Christs* name a publike testimony, with thine own disadvantage? and how oft hath thine heart bin effectually moved at the hearing of my Word, in such sort, that it hath wrought in thee an holy remorse, and an in-

ward contrition for thy ſins, which hath broken out into teares? have I not made thee a wreſtler againſt thy inordinate luſt? have I not given thee ſtrength many a time to ſtand againſt Sathans temptations, whereas if I had left thee to thy ſelfe, how often haddeſt thou bin made a prey to thine enemy?

Remembreſt thou not that the tempter hath aſſaulted thee, but I have withdrawne the occaſion of ſin? and when the occaſion ſerved, did not I reſtraine and hold back the

temp-

tempter? Yea, when both the tempter and occasion were present, have I not filled thy heart with the feare and love of my Name, and so kept thee from sinning against me? and whereas many times of thy weaknes thou hast offended, did I not with a melting heart, & mourning eye, raise thee again, and renew my former familiarity with thee; so that thou canst never say from the first houre that I begunne to renew thee, that I suffered thee to lye in thy sin, as I have done others that are strangers

from my grace? And many mo notable effects of my working in thee thou canst not deny.

Are not these the undoubted tokens of my grace in thee? will Nature do such things? maist thou not feele by these, that I have begun to apply to thee Christs merit for the remission of thy sin, and *Christs* vertue for quickning thee to a new life? Therefore thinke of thy selfe as basely as thou wilt: but let the worke of my grace be esteemed of thee according to the excellency of it: be humble and

and caſt down, when thou lookeſt to thine own corruption; I finde no fault with thee, but I rejoyce, and am glad at the new Workemanſhip which I have begun in thee. Indeed, if there were nothing in thee, but that which thou haſt of nature, thy eſtate were miſerable: but ſeeing thou ſeeſt a new workmanſhip in thee, bee comforted: art thou ſo in darkeneſſe, that there is no light in thee, or doth ſin ſo poſſeſſe thee, that beſide it, alſo there is not in thee a wil to do good, and a love

to righteousnes? If thou saist thou hast no sinne in thee, thou art a lyar: and if thou saist that there is no other thing in thee but sin, thou art also a liar. And thinkest thou, that seeing I have begun to translate thee from darknesse into my light and to make thee a New Creature; thinkest thou that I will leave thee, untill I have done my worke in thee? Therefore, my beloved, give not such eare to Satan, or thine owne corruptiō, as to take their testimony against me, or to make thee thinke that my

my pledges which I have given thee, are not worthy of credit, that by them thou ſhouldeſt bee aſſured of mercy.

The Soule.

I Cannot deny, O Lord, but that many times I haue felt the ſweetnes of thy heauenly cõſolations, which haue greatly rejoyced my Soule. But alas, my griefe is ſo much the greater, that by mine owne default I ſhould now bee deprived of them: for I haue grieued thy holy Spirit: yea, I haue done what I could to quench him: and therfore it is that

the Comforter, who was wont to refresh my soule, is away, nor can I feele his presence with me as before.

The LORD

BEcause I am not changed, therefore is it that ye, O Sons of *Iacob*, are not confirmed? Many indeed are the changes whereunto yee are subject, but I remaine the same, and there is no shadow of alteration with me, *Iames* 1. 17. Be not therefore afraid (O my Wel-beloved) neither esteeme thy selfe to be rejected of me, albeit that some-

ſometime I hide my face from thee; all my wayes are mercy and truth to mine. It is for thee, that ſomtimes I go from thee; and it is for thee, that againe I returne unto thee: for if I come, it is for thy conſolation, that continuall heavines, through thy manifold temptations, ſhould not oppreſſe thee. How oft haſt thou found this, whē thou wert ſicke of love, I have ſtrengthened thee with the Flagons of my wine, and comforted thee with my Apples? My fruit hath beene ſweet

in thy mouth, and I have put my left hand under thy head, and with my right hand I have imbraced thee, *Can.* 2.

But leſt the greatnes of my conſolations ſhould exalt thee to diſdaine thy brother and offend mee, by imputing that to thine owne diſpoſition, which thou haſt of my diſpenſation: I have againe withdrawne theſe glorious feelings from thee: give me the praiſe, that I know beſt what is expedient for thee. Had my Servant Saint *Paul* need to be humbled with the buffets

buffets of Satan, leſt hee ſhould have been exalted out of meaſure, by the greatneſſe of his revelations, and haſt not thou need that by thy inward exerciſes I ſhould hold thee humble? If my comforts were alwayes preſent with thee, thou wouldſt think thy heaven and permanent city were on the earth, and ſo ceaſe to enquire for a better to come: thou wouldeſt take the place of thy baniſhment for thy home; and the earneſt, for the principall ſumme which I have promiſed thee.

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Consider this wisely with thy selfe, that albeit I laugh not alike on thee at al times, & fil thee not alway with my joies, yet I alwayes love thee: for whom I love, I love unto the end. If I cloze the doore of my Chamber upon thee, it is not to hold thee out, but to learne thee to knock. If I cover my selfe w^th many veiles that thou canst not see a glance of my loving countenance, it is onely to stir thee up to seek me: and if sometime I seeme to goe from thee; it is to provoke thee to follow me

me; that thou maist make haste from the earth to heaven, where thou shalt enjoy me without intermission. Was *Ioseph* so wise, as to conceale his tender affection from his brethren, till he brought them to an humble acknowledging of their sin? and was he againe so loving, that when he saw thē humbled, his affection was inflamed, & compelled him to reveale himselfe unto them? and thinkest thou that I am lesse wise and louing in dealing with mine?

I gave at the first sharp answers

answers to the Petitions of that woman of *Canaan*: & so will I sometimes seeme to deale roughly with those whom I love, and to be angry even at their prayers; but in the end I will make my love manifest to them, and with my endlesse mercies embrace them.

The SOULE.

SVffer me yet once againe (Lord) to speake unto thee, that thou maist answer me, and I shall complaine no more. If we saw that such were our disposition, as thy holy word doth require in

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us, then ſhould thy comforts rejoyce: but alas, how far am I from that which I ſhould be! My ſtrength is enfeebled, therefore do my inordinate affections ofttimes overcharge me. If I turn me to pray, I cannot for the hardneſſe of my heart: the contrite ſpirit, the melting heart, the mourning eye is gone from me: If I ſeek comfort of thy Word, I finde it not, I am troubled alſo with doubtings, armies of feares and ſorrowes are againſt me, and all through weaknes of my Faith: for partly for want of that light that ſhould informe me, my infidelity

fidelity abuseth me, to think that the visitations come from thine anger, and causeth mee to answer the errors of my conscience, as if they were just accusations, and partly for want of that apprehending and applying vertue that is in Faith, I am spoiled of the comfort that thy word hath offered unto me: Therfore, ô Lord, have pitty on the desolate estate of my Soule.

The LORD.

LEt not (my beloved) the consideration of thy wants, defects, and imperfections discourage thee

thee: remember that the measure of Grace which I have given to my saints upon earth, I have called it an earnest penny, and the first fruits of the Spirit; to tell them that what ever grace they have gotten, it is nothing in comparison of that which they will get. Seeke not therfore that in the earth which I have resolved to give thee no wayes, till thou dost come to heaven: thy blessednesse in this life stands not in a saciety and full enjoying of that w^h thou wouldst have, but in an hungring and

and thirſting for it. If I had pronounced them bleſſed that are now ſatisfied with righteouſnes, then thy wants might moſt juſtly have diſcouraged thee; but I called them bleſſed that hunger. If therefore thou doeſt follow after ſanctification, and art weary of the ſervitude of thy ſinne; If thou doeſt ſeeke comfort in my Word, and canſt finde none of theſe at the firſt as thou wouldſt; yet remember I have promiſed to fulfill the deſires of them that feare me.

If it grieve thee that thou

thou canſt not pray at all times alike, remember that my children are oft-times evill Iudges of thẽ-ſelves, & that their eſtate is not alway to be mea-ſured according to their feeling: for many prayers may be made in them to mee, by my Spirit, with ſighs & ſobs, which they themſelves are not able to expreſſe, yet are knowne unto me, and are like loud crying voyces, which I cannot but anſwer.

The SOULE.

O *My Soule, content thee with the Lords diſpen-ſation,*

ſation, and doubt not, but all thy wants and holy deſires ſhall once be ſatisfied. Remember how careful thy Savior was of thoſe people that followed him, I have compaſſion *(ſaith hee)* on this people, becauſe they have continued with me already three dayes, and have nothing to eate. I wil not let them depart faſting leſt they faint in the way. *O moſt ſweet and comfortable ſpeeches! they ſeeke not from him and he is carefull to give them. If he was ſo careful to ſatisfie their bodily neceſsities, will h neglect the ſpirituall neceſsities of his*

his own? They followed him three dayes, and he counteth it a long time, they are to go from him, and hee feareth left they faint. O my diſtruſtfull Soule, wilt thou once learne to truſt in the mercy of thy God aſſuredly? will he not ſatiate thee, who ſeekes him, will hee not anſwer thee, who cries unto him? wil he not care for thee who haſt waited upon him, not three dayes, but many yeeres? and will he let thee faint in following him, who would not let thē faint, who were to go frō him? O ſweet Saviour, happy are they who truſt in thee (Lord) there-

fore

fore increase my faith in thee, that nothing be able ever to sunder me from thee.

The LORD.

AS for the weaknes of thy faith, which I see is the ground of all thy trouble, it proceedeth either from the want of knowledge, or else from the want of applicatiõ. It is indeed a speciall benefit to have the minde enlightned with true light. Seeke therefore my light to shine unto thee, by continuall prayer and searching the Scriptures, that thou bee not troubled with

with the errour of Conſcience, as if it were a iuſt accuſatiõ. I have ſet conſcience indeed to be warner unto thee; but then ſhalt thou take heed to her warnings, when they are warranted by my word. If the error of thy conſcience terrifie thee in any thing & make thee think that thy croſſes & viſitations do come from mine anger, goe and informe conſcience better by the Word; remember whom I chaſtiſe, I love: & whē I chaſtiſe thee, I am not ſeeking a ſatisfaction to my iuſtice: what marvell ſuch

thoughts

thoughts disquiet many? Cõsider, I pray thee, that notable promise of mine, made to my servant *David*, and in him to all the rest of my Saints, *If they breake my statutes, I will visit their transgressions with my rods, yet my loving kindnesse, will I not take from them, neither alter my covenant.*

The Soule

O Word full of comfort! my Soule, forget it never, that even whe his rods are laid on thee, yet his loving kindnesse is not taken from thee, and though thy transf-

tranſgreſſions be many, yet will hee not alter his Covenant with thee: remember it, I ſay, that in thy trouble thou give no more place to theſe miſcõceptions of Gods working with thee. As godly Iob *thought in his trouble, that the Lord was purſuing him for his ſins, and making him to poſſeſſe the iniquity of his youth, which as yet appeares by the courſe of that Hiſtory, was not the Lords intention: ſo have I thought many times that the heavy hand of the Lord layd on me, had proceeded from his wrath, as if he had ſhut up his tender*

mercy in displeasure from mee for ever: but (Lord) let thy light abide with mee, that I sinne no more with such distrustfull motions against thee: and now (LORD) speake on yet further to thy servant, for thy comforts have rejoyced my Soule.

The LORD.

NOw concerning the weaknes of thy faith in the apprehension and the Application of my promise: remember that I am hee who will not breake the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flaxe:

Flaxe: what ſmaller thing is there than a graine of Muſtard-ſeed? albeit the meaſure of thy faith were no more, yet have I not excluded it from the participation of my promiſes.

A loving Father will delight to bee holden by the hand of his tender child; and knoweſt thou not, that as a Father ſpareth his ſonne, ſo will the *LORD* ſpare them that feare him? haſt thou not read, that although the faith of my ſervant *Iacob* was very weake, as thou maiſt perceive by the

great feare hee conceived of *Esau*, yet his weake faith was able to hold me till I blessed him? Be not therefore discouraged; for albeit thou canst not lay hold on me with the hand of strong Faith, if thou canst but touch the hem of my garment with thy finger, thou shalt draw vertue out of mee. Consider also with thy selfe, that the faith of my Children is never greater, than when their feeling is weakest, and least perceived. It is easie for every one to beleeve in the middest of glorious

feelings, and unſpeake able joyes, but when a man can feele no ſenſible comfort in mee, and yet beleeveth in me, and waiteth on me for comfort, certainly the faith of that man is great: and ſuch was the Faith of my ſervant, who in his greateſt trouble gave me this anſwer, *Albeit thou wouldeſt ſlay mee, O Lord, yet* (both againſt ſence & feeling) *will I truſt in thee.* And did not alſo that Woman of *Canaan* with invincible Faith cleave to my mercy, even then, when ſhe had no feeling

of mercy, and I gave her no favourable answer: for which in the end I called her Faith a great Faith.

The SOULE.

O my Saviour, thou art the strength whereby I stand in temptation: cursed bee he that would make my soule to conceive wrongfully of thee. Be mercifull O Lord, unto mee, and never let the malice of mine enemy prevaile over mee. Sweet Iesus, keepe the heart that through thine owne Grace would faine keepe thee: and now, my Soule, remem-

remember that this is but the time of fighting; the time of triumphing will come: why then shall the continuance of these restles assaults disquiet thee? If thou haddest never bin victorious but once in all thy life time; yet what mercy had it beene that the Lord in the mid'st of the battell, should make thee to triumph? but thou canst not deny that many joyfull victories now and before hath the Lord given thee.

Therefore now my Soule, rejoyce and returne to thy former rest: For the Lord hath been beneficiall to thee,

and account thou ever one of these corporall victories a pledge to thee of that full and finall victory that once thou shalt enjoy over all thine enemies, when the God of peace shall tread downe Satan under thy feet.

The Soule rejoyceth in the Lord.

O Lord, if such comfort be in thy Crosse, what is in thy Crowne? and if thou dost give us such joy when thou takest us into thy hand, to correct us with thy rods, Lord, what wilt thou make us to finde, when thou shalt embrace us in thy armes

armes, to kisse us with the kisses of thy mouth? O that these feelings might for ever abide with me! what trouble would not bee easie where thy comforts are present? Surely, O Lord, all trouble vanisheth, so soone as thou dost begin to glance upon my soule. Therefore O my Love, my Light, my Life, my Ioy, my crown, my Glory, my strength, my help in the time of need, stand thou on my side, and I will not feare what mine enemy can doe to me. O happy time that ever I knew thee! Blessed bee the Name of the Lord for evermore.

The SOULE doth triumph over Satan.

O Enemy Satan, albeit thine enmity bee troublesome unto mee: yet I thanke my God through Iesus Christ, that thou art against me, and that he hath put in his warfare to fight against thee.

When I consider, that in Paradice the Lord proclaimed irreconciliable enmity betweene thee and my blessed Saviour, the seed of the Woman, Christ Iesus, I account my hope happy, that thou art against me: and that grace is given unto

unto mee to fight against thee: for thereby I know that I am none of thine, but that I doe stand on that side whereof Christ is the Captaine, all his Saints are Souldiers, and the victory is most certaine.

Oh deceitfull Serpent! if I have found such error arising of those sins, which foolishly I did by thy incitements: what should I have found, if I had followed thee in all the rest, from the which the Lords preventing mercies did keepe me? I have learn'd by experience that thou art a faithlesse Traitor; thou dost tempt a man

a man to ſinne, and for the ſame ſins, which he did by thy inſtigation, thou art the firſt that doth accuſe him.

The Lord confirme this good purpoſe of my heart, that I never hearken any more to thy lying words, and ſuffer not my ſoule to be circumvented with thy deceitful ſnares. And as for the worke of my ſalvation, ſeeing it is a worke that my God will work in deſpite of thee, wherefore ſhall I regard thy teſtimony? Thou didſt put it in queſtion to my Saviour, whether or no he was the Son of God: and what marvell if thou dareſt

ſay

ſay to his Children, that they are none of his? Is there any truth ſo undoubted, but thou dareſt deny it at any time? why therefore ſhall I enter into diſputing with thee any more? My ſalvation ſtandeth neither in thy queſtioning, nor in any anſwering, but upon the Lords unchangeable decree of election.

If thou ſhouldeſt ſpeake for me, yet ſhould I not bee the better; neither if thou ſpeake againſt me, am I the worſe: when thou didſt confeſſe that IESUS *was the Son of* GOD, *he rebuked thee, and thought it no honour*

nour to him to have thy testimony. When thou didst cry out, that Paul and Silas were the servants of the most high God, albeit thou spakest the truth, yet did they not accept of thy testimony: so although thou wouldest say to me, that I were the elect child of God, shall I thinke my selfe the surer for that? and if on the contrary thou dost deny it, am I therefore the more unsure of salvation? Speak what thou wilt; thou art alwaies like thy selfe, thou hast bin a lyer from the beginning. Cursed of the Lord art thou in all thy wayes and

and with all thy confederates: Curſed are they that are in friendſhip with thee: and bleſſed for ever be the Lord, who hath delivered me from thy deceite and tyranny.

The Concluſion of the Dialogue.

BLeſſed bee thou (O Lord) for that it hath pleaſed thee to viſit the baſe eſtate of thy ſervant, to ſuccour mee in my diſtreſſe, and to comfort mee with thy mercies: Lord evermore feed mee with this Manna, and refreſh me with the ſprings of

of the Water of Life. Shew at all times ſome ſigne of thy mercy on me, that mine enemy Satan, who laboureth to diſquiet mee, may bee aſhamed, becauſe thou art with me to ſuccour mee.

A comfortable Meditation.

IF yee will marke and conſider, ye ſhall finde that the children of *God*, in all their temptations, are not ſo much doers, with their will, as ſufferers againſt their will. This Cogitation comming

ming to my minde, ſuddenly comfort did ſpring in the middeſt of trouble, *GOD* giving mee grace to underſtand, that theſe motions wherewith I am troubled, were not ſo much actions done by me: for in truth neither do I like, or allow of them but as ſpirituall oppreſſions of mine enemy, who ſtill warreth againſt me, ſomtimes with armies of feares; ſometimes with armies of doubtings, and ſometimes with bands of unclean and wandring motions; and ſometimes with troopes of worldly cares

eares making invaſion upon my Soule, and labouring to quench the ſparke of ſpirituall Life which the Lord hath begun in me: therefore anſwer for mee (O Lord) for I ſuffer violence. My enemy would oppreſſe mee, but Lord my hope for ever is in thee: ſuccour me w^h thy ſtrength, and I ſhall live: and Lord impute not to mee any of thoſe ſinfull motions, which my enemy raiſeth in me againſt my Soule.

Conſider this wiſely, O my Soule, and remember it: God that hath entred thee

thee into this warfare, and is thy ſpectator and helper, will never reckon up to thee Sathans deeds for thine: and learn thou wiſely how to diſtinguiſh them, and faint not for them, but cõfort thy ſelfe as long as thou art able to ſtand at thy proteſtation, that thou doeſt ſuffer violence in them, and canſt ſay with the Apoſtle: *this is not I, but ſin which dwelleth in mee.* O Lord, deliver me from the rage of this ſpirituall tyranny. Many a time have I looked to have bin swallowed up; but thou haſt

haſt ſuſtained me. Bleſſed be my God for ever, and the Lord be my ſtrength to the end.

A Prayer.

O Lord, how can it be poſſible that my Soule can live here in this abſence from thee? or walke in the middeſt of theſe continuall ſnares, or ſtand againſt theſe raging temptations, except it pleaſe thee now and then to ſhew thy face unto mee? *Ioſephs* ſtate in priſon was not ſo heavy as mine; his temptations in

in *Potiphars* houſe, were not ſo continuall as mine are. And *Daniels* feare in the middeſt of Lions, was no greater than mine who every day taſte of a thouſand deaths. *Ieremy* in his darke dungeon was not vexed with ſuch horrors, as daily gather themſelves againſt mee. The onely comfort of my Soule is in thy mercies: thou wert with *Ioſeph*, and therefore the priſon was more pleſant to him than *Potiphars* Palace: thou wert with *Daniel*, and therefore the raging Lions were peaceable to him

him. Lord be with mee and increaſe thy ſtrength in my *ſoule* & I ſhall live. Though the time be not yet come, wherein I ſhall appeare in thy preſence and ſee thee; yet Lord, let mee have in this land of my Pilgrimage, thoſe glances of thy ſweet and loving countenance, that may ſuſtaine me; for thou Lord, art able to let me ſee as much joy in thy ſweet face in one houre, as may ſuſtaine mee for ever: and without this ſight, how can my Faith but faile, my Hope but hover, and my Life but languiſh?

languish? Therefore, O Lord hide not thy face from my Soule for ever, but as thou dost acquaint me with troubles, so let mee see at all times, that as my sufferings doe abound in me, so my consolations may abound through Christ Iesus. I know thou alwayes beholdest me in mercy; but Lord let me see that thou lookest upon mee, that I may feele thy mercies sweet unto my Soule, *Amen.*

FINIS.